

**Updated May 20, 2020**

**VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**

**COVID-19 Guidelines**

Operational Guidance for COVID Response will be updated frequently to incorporate the latest scientific, medical, and governmental recommendations. Please ensure you are using the most current document.

[Attachment 5](#) contains additional steps or different steps that will be taken when a “Stay Home, Stay Safe” order is in effect.

**COVID-19 GUIDELINES – Field**

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## Definitions

- a. **Close contact:** For the purpose of this protocol, close contact is defined as 6 feet or less from another person or in an area contaminated by their respirations.
- b. **Vulnerable** – Vulnerable will be used as defined by the CDC as at higher risk. The CDC currently lists as vulnerable: adults over the age of 65, pregnant women, and those with heart disease, lung disease, or diabetes. Please check the CDC link as these groups may change as new medical information becomes available. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html> Staff designated as vulnerable will not be used to work Isolation or Quarantine units, nor will they be assigned to transport inmates designated for Isolation. It is staff's responsibility to notify their supervisors of this information and, if requested, to provide documentation from their health care provider.
- c. **Mask** – Mask refers to a standard surgical mask. Masks issued to inmates must have the metal nose bridge removed.
- d. **N95 Mask** – An **N95 mask** (also called a respirator) is a **mask** that is worn over the face to prevent the inhalation of airborne particles. The **N95** designation means that the **mask** will filter at least 95% of particles 0.3 microns in size
- e. **Goggles** - goggles or disposable face shield that fully covers the front and sides of the face).
  - i. This does not include personal eyeglasses.
  - ii. If reusable eye protection is used it should be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- f. **Bleach Solution** – 5 (five) Tablespoons of bleach to 1 (one) gallon of water or 4 (four) teaspoons of bleach to 1 Quart (**Bleach Solution should be used within 24 hours of mixing.**)

## Section 1: General Precautions

### 1. General Precautions

Throughout the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic the following general prevention measures should be implemented to interrupt viral infection transmission. See *Table 1* below.

**Table 1. General Prevention Measures**

- a. **Promote good health habits** among employees and incarcerated individuals:
  - 1) Avoid close contact with persons who are sick.
  - 2) Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
  - 3) Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - 4) Cover your sneeze or cough with a tissue (or into a sleeve). Then throw the tissue in the trash.
  - 5) Greet without physical contact..
- b. **Conduct frequent environmental cleaning of “high touch” surfaces.**
- c. **Institute social distancing measures to prevent spread of germs** (e.g., minimize self-serve foods and group activities).
- d. **Employees should stay at home if they are sick.**
- e. **Influenza (flu) vaccine is recommended for persons not previously vaccinated.**

**1. Good Health Habits**

- a. Good health habits should be promoted in various ways (e.g., educational programs, posters, campaigns, assessing adherence with hand hygiene).
- b. This CDC website has helpful educational posters (please see, for example, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html>).
- c. Each site should ensure that adequate supplies and facilities are available for hand washing for both offenders and employees.
- d. Provisions should be made for employees, visitors, and offenders to wash their hands when they enter the site.

**2. Environmental Cleaning**

- a. The frequency of routine cleaning of surfaces that are frequently touched should be increased. These areas can include doorknobs, keys, handrails, telephones, computer keyboards, elevator buttons, etc..
- b. Each District Manager will ensure their local cleaning schedule is reviewed, and cleaning frequency increased, for the duration of this pandemic.

- c. Cleaning may be done using EPA-certified disinfecting wipes such as the “Red-capped PDI Sani Cloth Germicidal Wipes” or equivalent, as available.
- d. The CDC also indicates that most common EPA-registered household disinfectants are effective for cleaning. Use disinfectants appropriate for the surface.
- e. Bleach solution is a good alternative that is readily available (if used within 24 hours of mixing).
  - 1. Bleach solution is 5 (five) tablespoons (1/3<sup>rd</sup> cup) bleach per gallon of water OR
  - 2. 4 (four) teaspoons bleach per quart of water.
- f. Follow manufacturer’s instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date.
- g. Never mix bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.

## 2. Exclusion of Sick and Exposed Staff

- 1. COVID-19 could gain entrance to a site via infected employees. Staff should be instructed to stay home if they have fever and respiratory symptoms.
- 2. Any staff member who travels out of state (either on vacation or days off) will be required to quarantine upon their return.
  - This does NOT include staff who live in another state and cross borders as a matter of their normal commute.
  - This also does not include staff that live within Vermont but near a border and conduct routine activities (I.e. grocery shopping) in an adjacent state.
- 3. This quarantine will be for a period of 14 days.
  - If after 7 days, the staff member does not have symptoms, the staff member can arrange for a COVID test through their primary care provider OR a pop-up testing location if available.
  - If that test is negative, quarantine may be ended at that time prior to the 14 days.
- 4. If employees become sick at work, they should be advised to promptly report this to their supervisor and go home.
- 5. Employees should be advised to consult their health care provider by telephone.
- 6. If employees have been exposed to a known COVID-19 case as defined by the VTDOH, and if they have symptoms of fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, they should call their health care provider.

7. Each District Manager will ensure information is tracked for any employee that is sick or in-home quarantine.
8. The District Manager will review this information with the Central Operations Section to determine if a sick staff member had close contact with others and if any additional steps need to be taken to address this.
9. During the COVID-19 outbreak (as at all times), staff are required to follow usual reporting rules for notifying their chain-of-command when they will be away from work due to illness or potential exposure.
10. Upon arrival on-site, all staff and all other personnel (including visitors, vendors, and contractors) entering the site will be screened using [Attachment 6](#).
11. Each District Manager will determine where such screening will take place and will assign staff to perform the screening.
12. The screener will wear PPE as follows: Gloves, goggles, and surgical mask. (Surgical masks will be provided by NSCF)
13. Screening should take place as close to the entrance as reasonably possible and as soon as the staff member arrives.
14. Staff who answer “yes” to any question will be sent home.
15. All staff will be screened for fever with an infrared thermometer (as soon as these become available).
16. Staff with temperatures at or above 100.4 will be sent home.
17. Anyone who refuses to comply with the screening, including temperature check, will not be allowed entrance into the building.
18. A re-screening will not need to be done for staff exiting and re-entering the building on the same continuous shift.

### 3. Social Distancing - Offender Contact

1. Various administrative measures will be implemented to reduce contact between people and the chance of spreading viruses.
2. All offenders entering a P & P site will be screening using [Attachment 1](#).
3. Each District Manager will identify a specific location where this screening is to be completed.

4. Such location should be at the earliest point of contact between DOC staff and the offender **and** engaged in a way that allows for physical distance (6 feet) or physical separation (e.g., plexiglass) between them.
5. If the screening cannot be performed or if the offender refuses to submit to screening, offender access to the P & P office will be denied.
6. Any offender who screens positive will not be permitted to enter the office. They will be issued a surgical mask, and a copy of [Attachment 2](#).
7. A positive-screened offender will be directed to leave, follow up with their health care provider, and contact their PO **by phone**.
8. POs are expected to contact positive-screened offenders by phone if they do not hear back in one business day.
9. Probation Officers are instructed to contact all offenders to instruct them on whether they should report to the field office or not for an office visit.
10. Offenders not reporting for office visits will be contacted by telephone.
11. Level 4 and 5 Offenders will be seen in the office bi-monthly.
12. In consultation with the District Manager, Electronic Monitoring can be used to increase the level of supervision available.
13. Staff are encouraged to use technological options (e.g. Zoom, Skype, Facetime) to communicate with offenders when such is available and practical. This should be done through professional, not personal, accounts.
14. Offenders without a telephone will need to report as required by agency procedures.
15. P&P Officers who conduct office visits will do so in an area designated by the Manager.
  - a. To the extent feasible, these locations should be separate from staff working areas.
  - b. These areas must be sanitized after use.
16. No Urinalysis testing will be conducted on offenders during this time of operation under the Covid-19 operating procedures.
17. Work crew is suspended at this time.

18. Central Dispatch is suspended at this time. Dispatching will occur locally when required.
19. VSSs will be working remotely but are available via cell and email.
20. Field checks are suspended at this time.
21. Residence approvals will be automatic unless known victim/safety issues are identified.
22. Groups that are conducted in the P&P field offices areas are suspended.
23. Court appearances will be determined by the Chief Judge of each court or by order of the Supreme Court Justice. Officers are encouraged to select one (1) officer to cover all hearings for a particular court/judge.

### 3. Travel Permits

1. Travel Permits may be issued to non-restricted areas and approved for the following reasons:
  - a. documented employment purposes,
  - b. medical appointments or procedures,
  - c. court proceedings or other confirmed legal matters, or
  - d. attendance at approved treatment programs.
2. Travel pursuant to the Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision (ICAOS) will remain unaffected unless Executive Order 28 is enacted, at which point restrictions may be authorized.

### 4. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

1. The guidance above is designed to significantly reduce the circumstances in which a staff member would need to come into contact with an offender known, or suspected, to have COVID-19.
2. The below is to provide guidance for when such contact is necessary.
3. The offender will be issued a surgical mask and directed to wear it.
4. The offender will be directed to wash their hands.
5. PPE will be required when a staff member comes in contact with an offender with known, or suspected, COVID-19.
6. For offenders who have suspected exposure but are not displaying symptoms, staff will wear PPE as follows:

- a. Gloves
  - b. Surgical Mask
  - c. Goggles
7. For offenders who are displaying symptoms, staff will wear PPE as follows:
- a. Gloves
  - b. N95 Mask
  - c. Goggles
8. Gowns or Tyvek Suits will be worn for situations where a Use of Force appears likely.
9. Attachments [3](#) & [4](#) provide additional information on the safe use of this PPE.

## 5. Return to Incarceration/Transport

- 1. Returns to incarceration will be reviewed with the Field Services Operations Manager or Field Services Director in advance.
- 2. Public safety remains a matter of the highest priority and VTDOC will return offenders when it is necessary to address public safety risk.
- 3. Transportation of offenders who do not screen positive on [Attachment 1](#) (i.e., no reported exposure, no symptoms) will be conducted according to standard protocols.
- 4. All female returns will be directly to CRCF, regardless of whether they are a positive or negative screen.
- 5. NWCF and NECC will not be accepting returns.
- 6. Returns for Chittenden and Franklin counties will be transported to CRCF.
- 7. Lamoille, Morrisville, and St. Johnsbury returns will be transported to NSCF.
- 8. Returns from Barre will be transported to SSCF.
- 9. After any transport of an offender, the transport vehicle will be cleaned with a hospital-grade disinfectant.

## 6. Transport – Positive Screen

- 1. If transporting an offender who has screened positive, the standards listed below will be utilized in addition to normal transport protocols.
- 2. Prior notification will be made to the receiving facility.
- 3. The receiving Superintendent will be responsible for notifying the Central Operations Section.
- 4. Patient wears a surgical mask and washes their hands.
- 5. Probation Officer wears face shield or N95 mask and goggles. Wear gloves, gown, and eye protection if in close contact with inmate prior to transport.
- 6. Prior to transporting, all PPE (except for surgical mask / N-95 respirator) is removed and



hand hygiene (washing or thorough application of hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol) is performed. This is to prevent contaminating the driving compartment.

7. Ventilation system should bring in as much outdoor air as possible. Set fan to high.
8. DO NOT place air on recirculation mode.
9. Weather permitting, drive with the windows down.
10. Following the transport, if close contact with the patient is anticipated, put on new set of PPE. Wash hands after PPE is removed.
11. After transporting a patient, air out the vehicle for one hour before using it without a surgical mask or respirator.
12. When cleaning the vehicle, wear a disposable gown and gloves. A face shield or surgical mask and goggles should be worn if splashes or sprays during cleaning are anticipated.
13. Clean and disinfect the vehicle after the transport utilizing a hospital-grade disinfectant
14. If a decision is made to transport a patient with signs and symptoms of severe respiratory illness to a health care facility, the sending facility will notify the receiving health care facility of the pending transport of a potentially infectious patient. Staff should use appropriate judgment in determining whether an offender requires EMS services due to an emergent medical need *as they would in any other case*.

## Attachment 1 COVID-19 New Intake Screening Form

<b>1. Assess for Signs or Symptoms of Illness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Persons with symptoms of illness or cough should be masked immediately and separated from others.</li> </ul> <b>ASK - Do you have a...</b>		<b>Date of Onset:</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<b>Fever (100.4°F/38°C) // Record temperature: <u>    </u>°F/ <u>    </u>°C or felt feverish</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<b>Cough</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<b>Shortness of Breath or Difficulty Breathing</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<b>Chills</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<b>Muscle Pain</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<b>Sore Throat</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<b>New Loss of Taste or Smell</b>	
<b>3. If <span style="color: red;">YES</span> to ANY RISK AND SYMPTOM questions, do not allow the offender to enter the office. They should be directed to contact their health care provider and notify the PO <u>by phone</u> of the results.</b>		

Inmate Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Attachment 2 – Sick with COVID

See separate attachment.

## Attachment 3 -Safe Conservation of N95 Masks

N 95 respirator use, N95 filters at least 95% of airborne particles.

Strategies for conserving N95 respirators as approved by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)

Use hand hygiene before and after touching or adjusting.

Extended use: continuous use for repeated close contact encounters, can function within design specification for 8 hours of continuous or intermittent use.

Reuse: If officer leaves unit for bathroom or break remove the N95 without shaking it and put it into a paper bag with name on it wash hands. Use clean gloves when donning a used N95 and performing a user seal check. Discard gloves, wash hands.

Discard mask if contaminated with any bodily fluids, if obviously damaged, or becomes hard to breathe through.

Implement “just-in-time” fit testing. Plan for larger scale evaluations, training and fit testing. Limit respirators during training, allow limited re-use of respirators by individuals for training and then fit testing.

## Attachment 4 – PPE Sequence

See Separate Attachment.

## Attachment 5 - Stay Home, Stay Safe

The below guidance will be followed while Executive Order 01-20, Addendum 6 dated 3-24-2020 is in effect.

1. Level 4 and 5 Offenders should be contacted by phone weekly.
2. Offenders (including Level 4 & 5 Offenders) will not be seen in person on a routine or scheduled basis.
3. The District Manager will have the authority to determine when an in-person visit is required. Probation Officers who believe such a visit is warranted should consult with their District Manager.
4. Violations of the "Stay Home" Executive Order will not automatically result in a return to incarceration but will be reviewed on an individual basis and considering the potential risk to public safety posed by the specific behavior.
5. Review of all Travel Permits will be done in accordance with Executive Order 01-20, Addendum 6 dated 3-24-2020.

### Standby

1. Each District Manager will be responsible for developing a schedule that maintains two staff on standby. Such should cover all times outside of normal business hours.
2. These staff should have access to PPE necessary to conduct an emergency return to incarceration.
3. This staff will be available to respond to emergencies requiring a response from VTDOC during these hours.
4. Each District Manager will be responsible to determine the most effective way in which the staff on standby are to be reached and communicate this information to relevant community partners; most notably treatment houses, Correctional Facilities, and law enforcement.

## Attachment 6 Staff Screening Tool

- It is suggested that this form be laminated. Upon arrival to the facility the employees are asked to respond verbally to these questions and a temperature taken.
- If an answer to one of the questions is YES or a temperature exceeds 100.4, then issue the employee a mask to wear, contact the on-duty CFSS, and send the employee home. Recommend that they call their supervisor and consult with their primary care provider.
- A written copy of this form is NOT required. Any positive results will be reported on the Line List.

Today or in the past 24 hours have you had any of the following symptoms?	
Fever or felt feverish.	Yes ____ No ____
Cough that is abnormal for you?	Yes ____ No ____
Shortness of Breath or Difficulty Breathing	Yes ____ No ____
Chills	Yes ____ No ____
Muscle Pain	Yes ____ No ____
Sore Throat	Yes ____ No ____
New Loss of Taste or Smell	Yes ____ No ____
Current Temperature (Fever 100.4F/38C	Record Temperature F ____ C ____